

Writer's Choice

Grammar and Composition

Composition Practice

Grade 6



New York, New York Columbus, Ohio Woodland Hills, California Peoria, Illinois

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1.1 Writing as Self-Expression

Key Information

Freewriting is a good way to learn about your feelings and to explore your thoughts about a variety of personal issues.

■ A. Exploring Your Thoughts

To help figure out “what makes you tick,” answer the following questions in freewriting style.

What was the happiest time you had this week?

When and why were you most recently angry?

Where do you go when you want to be alone?

What is your favorite place to be with friends?

If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would you go?

■ B. Writing About What Makes You Tick

Use the information from your freewriting in Part A to write four or five sentences describing yourself. You may want to tell about your family, your friends, or your school. Imagine that you will send this description to a new pen pal overseas who knows nothing about you. Be creative!

1.2 Writing with Confidence

Key Information

You can keep a **journal** for writing about your thoughts and feelings for your eyes only, or you can choose to share parts of it with friends or your teacher.

■ A. Making Journal Entries

Making journal entries is fun and easy! To practice getting started, respond to each numbered item. Be sure to write about something you feel comfortable sharing with your teacher.

1. Imagine you have just learned that you won first place in a contest. Write a sentence that expresses your excitement. _____

2. Write a sentence that describes the kind of contest you won. _____

3. Write a sentence describing the first prize. _____

4. Write a sentence that tells what someone in your family said when he or she learned that you won. _____

5. Write a sentence telling what you said to the reporter who interviewed you for an article about winning the contest. _____

■ B. "Journaling" on Your Own

Write a journal entry about a real or imaginary sports victory or a personal goal you achieved. Bring the experience to life by describing in detail what happened, your role in making it happen, and how you felt about your success. Be sure to write about something you want to share.

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WRITING ABOUT LITERATURE

1.4 Responding to a Poem

Key Information

Poems are one way to communicate thoughts and feelings. You can respond to poems by writing in your journal, drawing a picture, or writing a poem of your own.

■ A. Responding to a Poem

Read the following poem. Then answer the questions about it.

Night Light

A clean, clear jar.
A dark, still night.
A time to wait.
A flash of light.
A quick, small hand.
A gentle close.
A bug inside.
A jar that glows.

Carole Houze Gerber

1. What experience is the poet describing? _____
2. Is she talking about a child's experience or an adult's? _____
3. How does the poem make you feel? _____

■ B. Writing a Poem

Use the space below to write a poem about something you liked to do when you were smaller or something you still enjoy doing. Your poem may or may not rhyme.

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1 Literature: From *The Invisible Thread*, Yoshiko Uchida

Key Information

Thoughtful, descriptive writing helps bring your personal experiences to life. Vivid descriptions tell about the sights and sounds—as well as the people—that were part of an experience.

A. Describing Someone You Know

In the literature selection from *The Invisible Thread*, the author, Yoshiko Uchida, describes a family outing. Uchida describes her sister Keiko as “fearless.” Think of someone you know well. Write several words that describe that person.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

B. Writing About Your Feelings

Write a paragraph or two about an experience you shared with the person you described in Part A. What was your response to the experience? How did you feel toward the person because of sharing the experience?

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2.1 Exploring the Writing Process

Key Information

The writing process begins with your first idea for a piece of writing and ends with the finished work. It includes five stages: **prewriting, drafting, revising, editing/proofreading, and publishing/presenting**. The process does not always move forward in a straight line; as you write, you may have to go back to an earlier stage before you go on to the next one.

■ A. Taking Notes

When Maya watched her friend Bernard cooking gumbo, she began to prewrite by taking notes. Observe a friend or family member doing a chore, playing a sport, or performing some other activity. Write some simple notes about what you observe.

■ B. Observing the Process

Reflect on the process you used to take the notes you wrote in Part A. Did you list steps in 1-2-3 order? Did one word spark an idea for another? First, briefly describe the process of taking notes. Then explain the purpose of taking notes.

2.2 Prewriting: Finding a Topic

Key Information
Learning about your interests by creating a cluster diagram is just one of the ways to find a topic.

■ A. Creating a Cluster Diagram

Center the words *My Interests* in the space provided. Draw a circle around them. Next, jot down your interests as they come to mind, circle each one, and draw lines to connect them with the first circle. Then as you think of details related to each interest, jot them down and connect them to that cluster. Try to fill the space.

■ B. Choosing a Topic

Choose a topic from the cluster. You may choose the one taking up the most room in the diagram. (It may be a favorite interest, or you may have more ideas about it.) Write a paragraph for your journal about the topic. Use the details included in the cluster.

2.3 Prewriting: Ordering Ideas

Key Information

Most writing has one of these four **purposes**: to tell a story, to explain something, to persuade someone, or to describe something. After deciding on your purpose for writing, you need to organize your ideas in an order that best suits your purpose.

A. Putting Details in Order

This list is taken from a student cluster about a trip to Santa Fe, New Mexico. Put numbers in the blanks to show the order in which you would give the details.

- _____ vendors display jewelry in the plaza
- _____ arrived by car from Albuquerque
- _____ on the third day visited Frijoles Canyon at Bandelier National Monument
- _____ shops sell silver jewelry, woven blankets, and pottery by local artists
- _____ shopped for souvenirs on the second day
- _____ ruins of the Anasazi Indians in the cliffs of Frijoles Canyon
- _____ museum at Palace of the Governor includes historical artifacts
- _____ on first day visited museums
- _____ Museum of Fine Arts has painting by Georgia O’Keeffe
- _____ climbed ladders to a *kiva*, or ceremonial chamber, of the Anasazi

B. Finding a Purpose

The four purposes for most writing are to tell a story, to explain something, to persuade someone, and to describe something.

1. Select the purpose best suited for the details in Part A.

2. Explain why you chose this purpose. _____

3. Draft a paragraph about the trip to Santa Fe, using the details listed in Part A.

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2.4 Drafting: Getting It Down on Paper

Key Information

Drafting follows prewriting. During the drafting stage you put ideas about your topic into sentences and paragraphs. Your draft is just a beginning, so be flexible. Experiment with different ways to express your ideas.

A. Preparing for Your Draft

You have been asked to write a short article about your family for a family reunion. The article should summarize important events happening in your family during the past year. It can be organized any way you choose. Use clustering, listing, or questioning to prewrite ideas for the article.

B. Writing Your Draft

Review the ideas you came up with during prewriting. Number them in an orderly, organized way. Now use them as the basis for drafting the article. It should be one page long. Use additional paper if necessary.

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2.6 Revising: Getting Paragraphs into Shape

Key Information

A good paragraph includes a **topic sentence** expressing the main idea. The supporting details make the main idea easier to understand. The sentences in a good paragraph flow smoothly. Likewise, the paragraphs in a good piece of writing flow smoothly from one paragraph to the next.

A. Shaping Up a Paragraph

Shape up the following paragraph. Cross out two sentences entirely. Six sentences are correct as written. Write “OK” in those blanks. Mark one of the six sentences as the topic sentence.

- 1. Did you ever wonder where words come from? _____
- 2. All words have an **etymology**, or history. _____
- 3. History, by the way, happens to be one of my favorite subjects—how about you? _____
- 4. The etymology of *lunch* is interesting. _____
- 5. It’s from the old Spanish word *lonja*, which means “slice.” _____
- 6. Lunch means something more than that today. _____
- 7. I had lasagna and fruit salad for lunch. _____
- 8. Still, you can hear how it sounds like the word from the sixteenth century. _____

B. Revising a Paragraph

Review the draft you have just corrected. To check the flow of the sentences, rewrite them as a paragraph. Use the space provided.

2.7 Revising: Writing Sentences That Flow

Key Information

Varying the length of your sentences will make your writing lively and interesting to read. After setting your writing aside for a few days, read it again for sentence variety. Combining sentences and using different beginnings for sentences are two ways to improve sentence flow.

A. Combining Simple Sentences

Combine the following simple sentences into longer sentences that are livelier and more interesting. Make sure they keep their basic meaning. You may need to rearrange the order of some words and add or delete other words.

1. The girls were hot and sweaty. The girls decided to take a break. _____

2. The hot summer sun beat down. The yellow bike glittered. _____

3. My brother gets mad. My brother stomps off to his room. _____

4. I hit the ball. I hit the ball again. I hit the ball again. _____

5. The dogs barked. The dogs were big. I was afraid of the dogs. _____

6. Juan likes canoeing. Juan likes biking. Juan likes most other outdoor sports. _____

7. I will be there. Maria will not. _____

8. Anthony may bring cookies. Anthony may bring candy. _____

9. My friend likes horses. My friend subscribes to *Whinney* magazine. _____

10. The birds raised their wings. They ruffled their feathers. _____

B. Writing a Paragraph That Flows

Choose one of the sentences you wrote in Part A. Write three or four more sentences on the same topic. Create a paragraph that flows by varying the beginnings of the sentences. Use a separate sheet of paper.

2.8 Editing/Proofreading: Checking Details

Key Information

When you **edit** your work, check your sentences for fragments and run-ons. Proofread for errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar. You may use a checklist to help you edit and proofreading marks to indicate corrections. Refer to your textbook, page 72, for a checklist.

■ A. Reviewing Proofreading Symbols

Write the proofreading symbol for each of the following errors.

error	symbol
missing comma	
insert	
capital letter	
lower-case letter	
period	
delete	

■ B. Using Proofreading Symbols

Use proofreading symbols to correct the errors in the following sentences. One sentence has no errors.

1. I put salt pepper and butter on my eggs.
2. demetrius took the Train to Philadelphia Pennsylvania.
3. She did not need to borrow my bat.
4. The beach was very sandy and the water was warm.
5. I told her I would see her after school she agreed to meet me.
6. She told Maria september seemed a long time away.
7. Are you going to follow me.
8. she was taping the show to watch later.

2.9

Publishing/Presenting: Sharing Your Work

Key Information

You may choose to share your writing in different ways. For example, you may give an oral presentation to your class or publish your writing in the school newspaper. Each way of presenting your writing has its own rules.

■ A. Selecting What to Share

Imagine that you could select any three past assignments or journal entries to be published. Write a short paragraph telling which ones you would choose and why.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

■ B. Selecting Where to Share

In what publication would you like to see your three pieces of writing published? If you would choose a national newspaper or magazine, tell why you feel your article is right for the publication. For example, if the magazine publishes sports stories, your article about basketball would work for that magazine.

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2 Writing in the Real World: Travel Writing

Key Information

The writing process begins when you explore your ideas. Regardless of the purpose of your writing, first you must get your thoughts together before going on to the drafting stage.

A. Collecting Ideas

When Curtis Katz decided to write about an Amtrak train route, he collected information from other train crew members. Think of three people you know who are good sources of information on a topic. List each person's name, occupation, and area of interest.

Name	Occupation	What He/She Knows About
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

B. Drafting Your Work

Choose one of the people you listed in Part A. Write five questions you would ask that person. If possible, interview the person. Then write a draft. Use additional paper if necessary.

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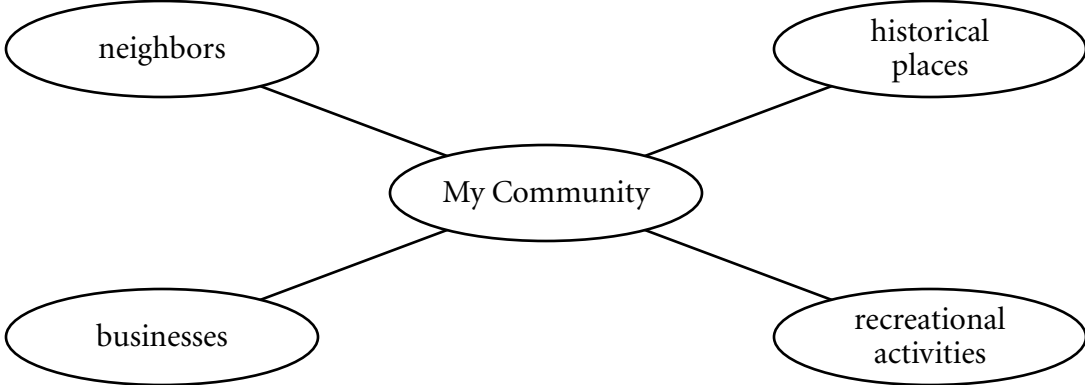
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2 Writing Process in Action

Key Information
Listing, questioning, and clustering are methods of **prewriting**. **Drafting** develops your prewriting into sentences and paragraphs, which will benefit from the revising and editing/proofreading stages. You may choose to **present** or **publish** your writing.

A. Practicing Prewriting

A student began this cluster diagram. Expand the diagram by adding details and attaching them to the cluster.



B. Drafting

Use the cluster diagram you created in Part A to draft a paragraph. You may use only a part of the cluster diagram. Remember to organize the details in your paragraph and to include a topic sentence.

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3.1 Painting a Picture with Words

Key Information

You use descriptive language every day to make your experiences come alive for others. Descriptive writing also helps to give a clearer picture of what you observed.

■ A. Describing a Person

Imagine that a new neighbor is walking toward your house or apartment. Your little sister is too short to see out the window. Describe to her in detail what this person looks like.

■ B. Describing an Event

Remember an event that made you very happy. Exactly what happened to make you happy? How did you feel at each moment of the event? Write one paragraph describing the event and your feelings. Use descriptive words to make your sentences lively.

3.4 Ordering Descriptive Details

Key Information

Descriptive details need to be ordered in some way that makes sense to readers. Transition words such as *above*, *behind*, and *after* help make descriptions easier for readers to follow.

■ A. Choosing Good Transitions

From the box choose the transition that (1) could be used to combine each set of sentences below to make the description easier to follow, or (2) could be placed before the first word in the second sentence to make the description easier to follow. Add extra words if needed. Rewrite the sentences, adding the transition words or phrases you select.

Transitions

in back of	above	first
in front of	below	last
to the left of	beside	then
to the right of	next	after

1. The tall girl stood. She blocked my view. _____

2. My heart pounded as the first speaker sat down. It was my turn. _____

3. Don't open your test booklets yet. Write your name on the front. _____

4. I heard a horrible, growling noise. I ran. _____

5. I looked. I saw the rushing water. _____

■ B. Writing with Transitions

Choose four transitions you did not use in Part A. Write four sentences, using a different transitional word or phrase in each to order a descriptive detail.

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WRITING ABOUT LITERATURE

3.6

Getting to Know a New Place

Key Information

Reading a description of a place can introduce you to new experiences. It often makes you aware of new feelings in yourself in response to what you have read. You can respond to a place description by doing your own writing.

■ A. Freewriting About a Place

Someone once divided travelers into two categories: those who like to visit the mountains and those who prefer the sea. Freewrite several phrases and sentences describing what you would like to see and do in both locations.

■ B. Describing a Place in Detail

Imagine you have just awakened and opened the window of your seaside cottage or your mountain lodge. Stick your head out, take a deep breath, and look around. What do you see, hear, and smell? Vividly describe your experience in one of these locations.

3

Writing in the Real World: Descriptive Writing

Key Information

John Boulanger and the other scientists who observed life on Mt. Logan used description to record their findings. Colorful descriptions of objects, animals, people, and surroundings make your firsthand observations and experiences vividly real.

A. Brainstorming a Vivid Description

Look in your pockets, purse, or backpack. Take out an object, and put it on your desk. Do not name the object, but describe it in vivid terms. List words and phrases that describe what it looks like, what it feels like, and what it might be used for.

What it looks like	What it feels like	What it can be used for
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

B. Writing a Vivid Description

Use the words and phrases you have listed above to write a vividly descriptive paragraph about the object. Do not name the object. Show the paragraph to your teacher or to a classmate. Can he or she guess what you have described?

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3 Literature: From *Morning Girl*, Michael Dorris

Key Information

When you write a description of something new or unfamiliar, try comparing it to something familiar. This technique helps to make your description easier for readers to see in their own minds.

A. Describing Your Face

In Michael Dorris’s story, *Morning Girl* uses her sense of touch to begin to get an impression of what she looks like. You can do the same. Gently touch your chin, nose, forehead, and ears. Write a word or phrase that describes how each feels compared to something else that is familiar to you. For example, “The skin on my face feels soft, like a freshly washed blanket.” Use your imagination!

chin: _____

nose: _____

forehead: _____

ears: _____

lips: _____

B. Writing About Your Face

Use the information you have collected about your face to write a descriptive paragraph. Add one additional bit of descriptive information of your own choosing. (What do your eyebrows feel like? Your eyelashes?) Be funny, if you want, but also do your best to be accurate.

Composition Practice

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3 Writing Process in Action

Key Information

Effective descriptions are based on careful observations. Carefully choose and order your details to present the clearest possible picture to your readers. Sensory details make your descriptions vivid. Good transitions help your descriptions flow in an orderly manner.

A. Bringing Sensory Details to Life

Has your mouth ever watered when you smelled the air in a pizza parlor or in a bakery? Does the odor of a certain perfume or cologne make you think of a beloved friend or relative? Does that first whiff awaken your other senses as well? Use the space below to develop a word picture about one of your favorite smells. Follow the stages of prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing/proofreading.

Prewriting

Drafting

Revising

Editing/Proofreading

B. Presenting Your Word Picture

Write a final, polished version of your word picture. Be prepared to share it with your teacher or a peer reviewer.

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4.1 Developing a Real-Life Story

Key Information

A narrative is a story that answers the question “What happened?” Before writing a narrative, determine your purpose and your audience. Then write a strong opening paragraph that will capture your readers’ attention.

A. Determining Purpose and Audience

Many types of narratives will be read only by those with a particular interest. Read the following possible subjects for narratives. Tell what the purpose would most likely be and what types of readers each narrative would probably attract.

Idea	Purpose	Audience
pro football game	_____	_____
comic strip about safety	_____	_____
biography of a scientist	_____	_____

B. Writing a Strong Opening Paragraph

Think of a real-life story you would like to tell. In the space provided, state the idea, and identify the purpose and audience of your narrative. In your journal, write a strong opening paragraph that you feel will capture your readers’ interest.

1. Idea for my narrative: _____

2. Purpose for my narrative: _____

3. Audience for my narrative: _____

4.2 Keeping a Story on Track

Key Information

To keep your story on track, sort through details and events. Write only about those details and events that are important for the reader to know and essential to your story.

A. Putting Details in Order

The following sentences tell a story about a girl who acted as a spotter in the sport of gymnastics. Number the sentences in the order they should appear in a paragraph. Put an X before the sentence that does not belong with this group.

- _____ At the end of practice, Gina offered to be my spotter on the trampoline.
- _____ First I helped Gina perform a backward somersault on the balance beam.
- _____ Gymnastics is not as fast-paced as basketball.
- _____ Next she practiced mounting the uneven parallel bars.
- _____ Last week my friend Gina asked me to be her spotter.
- _____ I caught Gina's foot as it slipped once from the beam.

B. Making Sentences Flow

Rewrite the sentences from Part A as a paragraph. Make sure the details are in the correct order.

4.3 Writing Dialogue

Key Information

Dialogue is the exact words spoken by characters in a story. Dialogue can make your story lifelike and exciting. Dialogue is always set off with quotation marks before and after a speaker's exact words. It helps to use the word said to show which character is speaking.

■ A. Matching Dialogue and Characters

Dialogue helps the reader get to know each character in a narrative. It shows the exact words a particular character uses. Read the dialogue below. From the character box, select the real-life person you believe is most likely to use those words.

Character Box		
coach baby-sitter grandmother	brother teacher cheerleader	dentist doctor

1. "This will feel numb in a couple of minutes." _____
2. "When did you first feel this pain?" _____
3. "Keep your hands off my stuff!" _____
4. "Push 'em back, push 'em back, way back!" _____
5. "Please pass your papers to the front of each row." _____
6. "Your mother never gave me a moment's worry." _____
7. "Hop to it! Everyone run three times around the field." _____
8. "When should I put the baby down for his nap?" _____

■ B. Writing Effective Dialogue

Choose one of the quotes from Part A, and think of someone to whom it might be addressed. Give each speaker a name, and write an introductory paragraph about how the two characters meet. Then write at least four or five lines of dialogue between the two speakers. Use words like *said* to clarify which person is speaking.

4.4 Writing About an Event

Key Information

When writing about real-life experiences, include reasons which explain what made the experience special to you. Determine why you want to share the story. Ask yourself what information your audience needs to know and how you can let your audience know who you are. Decide on the best way to conclude your story.

■ A. Drafting a True Story

Have you ever had a narrow escape from danger? Has your heart seemed to leap into your throat at an amusement park? Did you recently master a skill, reach a personal goal, or learn something startling? Draft a true story about a personal experience based on one of these topics or on another topic of your choice. Include details about what happened, and tell how you felt. Be prepared to share your draft with a classmate.

■ B. Revising a True Story

Exchange papers with a classmate. Ask him or her to review your story and respond to the following questions. Then revise your draft based on your partner's response to your story.

1. Are events clearly described? _____

2. Are specific details used to bring the story to life? _____

3. Is it clear how the writer feels about this experience? _____

4. Is the story complete, or do you want to know more? _____

4

Writing in the Real World: Biography

Key Information

Virginia Hamilton spent five years researching Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois's life before writing his biography. Before you begin writing a biography, it's important to gather lots of basic information about your subject. You will then need to sift through the facts and build your story around the information that you believe is most important.

A. Gathering Facts

From your own knowledge, answer the following questions about a family member you know well:

1. What is the person's name? _____
2. What is his or her relationship to you? _____
3. What is the family member's age? _____
4. Where did he or she grow up? _____
5. Does this person have an occupation? If so, what is it? _____
6. What are his or her hobbies? _____
7. Describe this person's appearance. _____

8. What type of personality (shy, outgoing, and so on) does this person have? _____

9. Bring the person "to life" by sharing a comment he or she often makes. _____

10. Give one or two examples of what about this person makes him or her special to you.

B. Putting the Story Together

Read the answers you wrote in Part A. Sift through the facts, but use most of the pieces of information you have gathered. On a separate sheet of paper, use the information to write a short biography about your family member. Add details as you write the biography.

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4 Literature: From “The Jacket,” Gary Soto

Key Information

A character’s outward responses to events and to the actions of others give clues to what he or she is feeling inside.

■ A. Gaining Insight into Characters

In “The Jacket,” a real-life narrative by Gary Soto, the author does not tell his mother how much he hates the jacket she buys him. Based on what you learn about his family, write a paragraph or two that explains why you think he keeps his feelings to himself.

■ B. Writing About Characters

Pretend you are Gary Soto. Imagine that you have a different reaction to the ugly green jacket. You may be grateful, surprised, or uncaring. Write a new ending to the story in one or two paragraphs, using a different response to the jacket.

4 Writing Process in Action

Key Information

Whether they are real or imaginary, good stories should contain action and be logically ordered. Use details—and dialogue, if appropriate—which bring the stories to life.

■ A. Bringing a Story to Life

In “The Jacket,” Gary Soto was ashamed of his jacket, and that shame affected his behavior. Think of an article of clothing someone in your family owns and enjoys wearing, such as an old dress, a flannel shirt, or a team uniform. Give your reaction to the clothing. Maybe you don’t like it, but why do you think the wearer likes it? Supply important details. If appropriate, include dialogue between you and the family member.

■ B. Illustrating Your Writing

Use the space below to draw a picture of the clothing you described in Part A. Write a short description that links it to the story. For example, “This is the shirt my mother always wears to wash the car.”

5.1 Writing to Help Others Understand

Key Information

Expository writing shares knowledge by providing information to readers about the world around them. Expository writing may inform, explain, define, direct, or compare and contrast.

■ A. Learning About a Process

Imagine you are explaining to a Martian how to use one of these pieces of earth equipment: dishwasher, VCR, tape player, vacuum cleaner, or car radio. What questions might the Martian have? For example, where does the dirt go in the vacuum cleaner? Where does the water go from the dishwasher? Write four good questions about the process for using this equipment.

■ B. Explaining a Process

Write a paragraph about the piece of equipment you chose in Part A. Explain its purpose, how it works, and how to use it. For example, the vacuum cleaner must be pushed; the dishwasher door opens down, not sideways. Try to answer the questions from Part A. Be creative—and don't forget that the Martian knows nothing about the equipment!

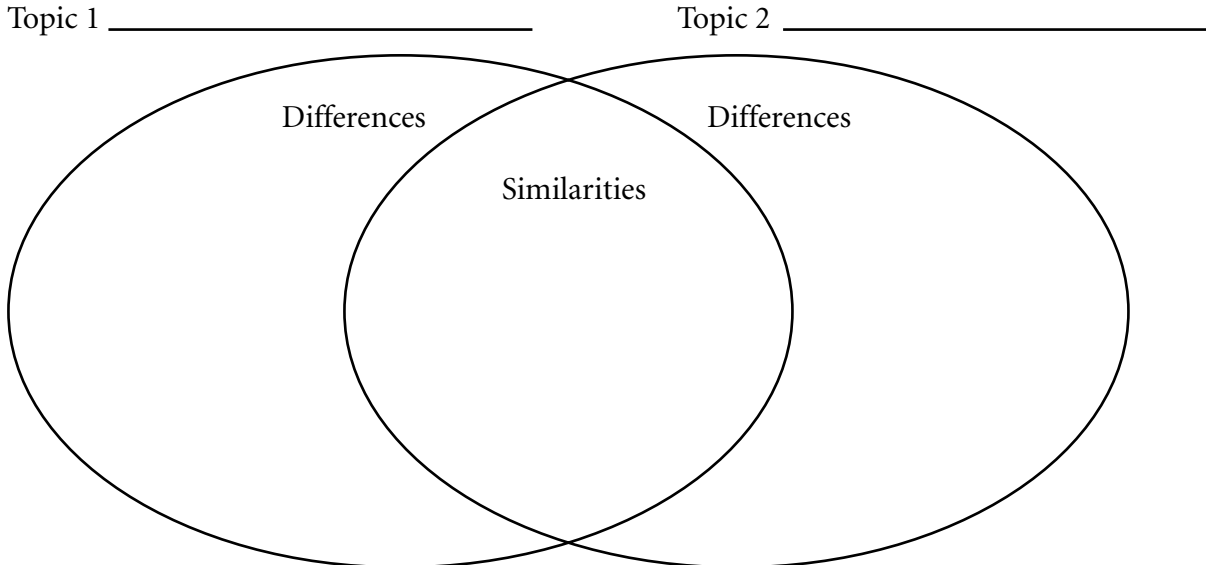
5.2 Comparing and Contrasting Two Things

Key Information

Comparing helps you see how things are alike. **Contrasting** shows you how they are different. To compare and contrast two things effectively, you first need to examine each of them and list details before sorting out what you have observed.

A. Making a Venn Diagram

Use a separate sheet of paper to list details about two of your favorite sports, hobbies, or television shows. Then follow the example on page 91 in your textbook to fill in this Venn diagram with the two subjects. List the ways they are similar where the two circles intersect. Then list how each one is different under *differences*. Use the Venn diagram to compare and contrast your two favorites.



B. Writing Your Draft

Use the information from your Venn diagram in Part A to draft a journal entry about the similarities and differences you discovered about your subjects. Compare them subject by subject by telling first about Topic 1. Then give information about Topic 2.

5.3 Explaining How to Do Something

Key Information

Explaining things in the correct order, one step at a time, is the best way to make a process clear. Use transition words such as *first*, *then*, *after*, *next*, and *finally* to help link the steps to one another.

A. Using Transition Words Effectively

Rewrite the following steps in the order you would use to heat soup. Choose the most effective transition word to introduce each step in the process: *first*, *then*, *after*, *that*, *next*, *finally*.

- Remove the top from the can, and pour the soup into the pan.
- Stir the soup over medium heat until it's hot and ready to eat.
- Gather together a can of soup, a pan, and a can opener.
- Attach the can opener to the lip of the can and turn it slowly until the top of the can comes off.
- Put the pan on the stove, and turn on the burner to medium.

B. Writing Effective Directions

Use the step-by-step directions you put in order in Part A as a model to write directions for preparing another simple type of food or drink. For example, you could explain how to make toast or how to pour a glass of milk. Divide the directions into easy-to-follow steps. Underline the transition words you use.

Step 1: _____

Step 2: _____

Step 3: _____

Step 4: _____

Step 5: _____

5.4 Writing a Report

Key Information

A report is built on facts, statistics, examples, and other information. The introduction tells what the report is about. The body shows what information you discovered in your research. The conclusion sums up what you learned.

■ A. Taking Good Notes

Writing a report begins with gathering information. As you read about your subject, take notes on the information you find. Then you will have many ideas and details to choose from as you begin to draft the report.

Read the following paragraphs, and make some notes in your own words. Remember to jot down the subject, title, and author.

The moment you start to collect ideas, you're prewriting. The first three letters of this word, *pre*, mean "before." So prewriting is the stage that comes before you put your thoughts into connected sentences and paragraphs. In this stage writers explore ideas and develop them into topics to write about. (*Exploring the Writing Process*, Jacqueline Jones Royster, Mark Lester, and Ligature, Inc., page 45.)

Drafting means putting sentences on paper or typing them into a word processor. In writing a first draft, try to get your ideas down in sentences. Don't worry about errors in spelling and punctuation. You can correct them later when you revise your draft. Now is the time to try out words and phrases, cross out ideas, and add details. Follow your plan as a guide, but use other good ideas that may come to you while writing. (*Reading Literature*, Jacqueline L. Chaparro and Mary Ann Trost, page 113.)

■ B. Writing a Good Introduction

Reread the notes you took in Part A. Select one set of notes, and use them to write an introduction in your journal that tells what a fully developed report would be about.

Name Class Date

WRITING ABOUT LITERATURE

5.5 Writing a Book Report

Key Information

Include the following information in your book reports: title, author's name, names and descriptions of main characters, and the setting. Also write a summary of what happens in the book and a brief explanation of what you thought of the book.

■ A. Drafting a Book Report

Imagine you are going to write a book. Make up a title and provide other information about the imaginary book below. Be funny, if you wish, but be sure to provide vivid details about the characters and setting. Write a summary that might entice others to read your book. Finally, tell why you would choose to write the type of book (adventure or autobiography, for example) that you described.

Title: _____

Author: _____

Main characters: _____

Setting: _____

Summary: _____

Why I would choose to write this type of book: _____

■ B. Responding to a Book Report

In your journal, write a paragraph describing how you would like readers to respond to the book you described in Part A. For example, do you want readers to think your book is funny? Do you want them to understand you better? Briefly explain why you wrote your book.

5 Writing in the Real World: Expository Graphic

Key Information

When Steve Crengros and his team wrote the informative article about Michael Jordan, they were sure to vary their words, give sources for their facts, and convey those facts as simply and clearly as possible. The graphic that illustrates the words also helps to convey information.

A. Writing Effective Subheads

Read the following short paragraphs. From the subhead box, select the subhead that most clearly introduces each paragraph, and write the subhead in the space provided.

Darkroom Procedures and Safety Precautions

Subheads
Keep the Door Shut
Darkroom Safety Tips
Why Darkrooms Are Dark

Subhead 1: _____

Photographs are developed in a place called a darkroom. Why does the room bear this name? It must be totally dark so no light comes in contact with the developing film. Because pitch blackness is required, you must be especially careful while carrying out developing procedures.

Subhead 2: _____

You will be immersing film into liquid to develop it and must remember not to touch light switches with wet hands. Also, be sure never to touch the chemicals used in the developing process. Instead, wear rubber gloves and use tongs to move the prints from one chemical “bath” to another. Be sure to put all the chemicals away when you are finished.

Subhead 3: _____

Chemicals can cause your skin to burn and itch. To keep this from happening, use a wet cloth to wipe off the surfaces in the darkroom when you are finished. Another important precaution—be sure you have all the equipment you need before you begin developing the film. Opening the darkroom door may expose the developing film to outside light and ruin it.

B. Creating an Expository Graphic

Reread the paragraphs about darkroom safety and procedures. In your journal draw an expository graphic that illustrates one of the points. Write a subhead and at least two related sentences to support the graphic.

5 Writing Process in Action

Key Information

Keep these tips in mind when you are doing expository writing to inform and explain. Prewriting may include research about your topic. When drafting, include as much information as possible, and use transitions between steps. In your revision make sure included steps are orderly and complete. Before publishing or presenting, edit and proofread for grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

■ A. Revising Your Work

Look in your journal or portfolio for a piece of expository writing about a process you did earlier this year. Reread it, keeping in mind what you have learned about the writing process. Ask yourself these questions: Is my introduction interesting? Are my steps in order? Have I used transitions when needed? Use the space below to revise your earlier writing.

■ B. Presenting Your Work

Look over the revision in Part A. Ask yourself whether a reader could carry out the process you have described. Double-check the steps involved by numbering them and listing them in order below.

Composition Practice

Name Class Date

6.1 Taking a Stand

Key Information

Persuasive writing attempts to change readers' attitudes or get them to take a particular action. Persuasive writing usually begins with a statement of the main idea, followed by evidence that supports it. Presented well, evidence can make a reader think or feel a certain way.

A. Getting Started

You've decided to write a persuasive article about how visiting a new place can be interesting and fun. Choose one place. Respond to the following questions and statements to help develop your ideas for the article.

1. What group of people are you trying to persuade? _____
2. State your main idea clearly. _____

3. List three good reasons why visiting this place is a good idea. _____

4. Tell how visiting this place has helped you or enriched your life in some way. _____

B. Writing a Persuasive Article

Use the information in Part A, along with other ideas you want to share, to write a two paragraph persuasive article about the value of visiting this place.

6.2 Stating a Position

Key Information

Before beginning to draft a persuasive paper, ask yourself these questions: Do I know enough about this topic? Do I care about the topic? Do people disagree on this topic? Then write a main-idea statement that will appeal to the audience for which it was written.

A. Selecting Appropriate Main-Idea Statements

From the box below, select the audience most likely to be interested in reading a persuasive report based on each main-idea statement listed.

Audience		
doctors	teachers	children
grandparents	vegetarians	parents

Main-Idea Statements

1. Nighttime fears in young children are normal. _____
2. Traveling with grandchildren can be easy and fun. _____
3. Saturday morning cartoons are wonderful! _____
4. Carrot casseroles really do taste great. _____
5. Healthy doctors are more efficient and effective. _____
6. The teachers' lounge needs new furniture. _____

B. Writing Good Main-Idea Statements

Take each main-idea statement in Part A, and rewrite it for a different audience. Select the new audience from the box in Part A.

6.3 Using Facts and Opinions

Key Information

Facts are statements that can be proved. Opinions are personal beliefs or feelings and cannot be proved. In persuasive writing the opinions of experts can serve as good evidence.

■ A. Distinguishing Between Fact and Opinion

As you read the following statements, think about the difference between a fact and an opinion. Then write *fact* or *opinion* in the space provided.

1. Some students have pierced ears. _____
2. Soccer is the most exciting sport in the world. _____
3. Crossing your fingers will bring good luck. _____
4. Studies show that exercise is good for you. _____
5. All kids hate to eat liver! _____
6. I believe cross-trainers are better than sneakers. _____
7. Most judges recommend a “cooling off” period before people file lawsuits. _____
8. Children generally need more sleep than adults. _____

■ B. Using Facts and Opinions to Support Main Ideas

A few communities in the United States have established a twelve-month school year. Students attend school year round, with two- or three-week vacations in the fall, winter, and spring. On a separate sheet of paper, draft a persuasive essay on the topic of a twelve-month school year. Include what you like about it and what you don't like about it. You might use some of the following facts or opinions in your paper. You may take a point of view opposite to any opinion presented. Just be sure to back it up with solid evidence.

- a. School officials say year-round attendance makes better use of facilities.
- b. Old buildings without air-conditioning would not be comfortable in the summer.
- c. Students in the United States get more days off than those in Japan and other developed countries.
- d. Students in other developed countries do better in school than students in the United States.
- e. Many teachers use the summertime to study and prepare for the school year.

Name Class Date

WRITING ABOUT LITERATURE

6.4 Writing a TV Review

Key Information

To gather information for a TV review, jot down notes about facts or images as you watch the program. If possible, tape the program and watch it again, or watch the show with a friend who can discuss the program's strengths and weaknesses with you.

A. Gathering Information for a TV Review

Imagine that a local television station has selected you to be on a youth panel that reviews current TV programs. The panel recommends shows to renew for next season and shows to cancel. Use the chart below to compile information about a series you think should be renewed next season. Describe the series (which includes all the episodes shown during the season) rather than just a single episode.

Name of series: _____

Time aired: _____

Subject of series: _____

Regular characters: _____

Strengths: _____

Weaknesses (if any): _____

Why show should be renewed: _____

B. Writing a TV Review

Use the information you compiled in Part A to write a two-paragraph persuasive review for *TV Guide*, telling why the series should be renewed for next season. Use descriptive words to tell why you feel this series is of interest to people your age.

6

Literature: From “Thanking the Birds,” Joseph Bruchac

Key Information

As Joseph Bruchac explains in “Thanking the Birds,” a good way to share information about cultural values is through stories and examples. Stories and examples can also be used in persuasive writing to share your personal beliefs with readers.

■ A. Using Examples Persuasively

Think of an issue you know about and care about. Write a main-idea statement; then list three examples that might persuade readers to agree with your feelings about this issue.

Main-idea statement: _____

Persuasive examples: _____

■ B. Writing Persuasively

Have you heard the expression “Actions speak louder than words”? In the literature selection “Thanking the Birds,” Swift Eagle’s actions with the boys were more persuasive than lectures would have been. Think of another situation in which actions were—or could have been—more effective than words. For example, your brother may have told you how to stack the dishes in the drainer after washing them when he should have shown you first. Write two or more paragraphs describing the situation.

6 Writing Process in Action

Key Information

When writing persuasively, keep the following ideas in mind: Begin with a main-idea statement and support it with evidence in the form of facts and opinions. Put your evidence in the most persuasive order. Consider your audience when writing a main-idea statement.

A. Identifying Main-Idea Statements

Read the following statements. Put a check mark after the main-idea statement.

1. Meet with your child’s teacher, and learn what the class is doing.
2. Set aside an hour each night to supervise your child’s homework.
3. With your child, set reasonable expectations about what marks he or she is capable of earning.
4. There are many things parents can do to help their children do well in school.

B. Ordering Evidence Persuasively

Imagine you are writing to the PTA. Develop a persuasive piece of writing based on the main-idea statement you identified in Part A. Use supporting evidence found in the other statements, and add additional ideas of your own. Include your own opinion about how much a parent should be involved in helping a child with his or her studies. Think about how you will persuade parents of the best ways to help their children succeed in school.

C. Revising

Now have a peer reviewer read your draft. Ask if he or she was persuaded. Then read your draft yourself. Is your main idea clear? Is your writing directed to your audience? Does your evidence support your main idea? Revise your draft using additional paper.

